

THREE-PENCE

OLD
TALES
NEWLY TOLD

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
LONDON.



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OLD TALES NEWLY TOLD.



A BOW DRAWN AT A VENTURE.



PERHAPS some of our young readers amuse themselves at times by practising with the bow and arrows, and a very pleasant pastime, no doubt, it is to them. But, then, instead of “drawing the bow at a venture,” they have an aim. They set up their target, and try to fix their arrows in the centre; and the nearer they come to this the more skilful they think themselves. Skill is always of use, although its real value must very much depend upon the way it is employed, and the end to which it is applied

We dare say most of you know the story of William Tell ; but it is so much to our purpose, that we think it will bear telling once more. About the year 1300, an Austrian of the name of Gesler was made the governor of the Swiss ; he was very cruel and proud. He caused his hat to be fixed on a pole in the market-place of a town of which William Tell was a native, with a command to all the people, upon pain of death, to bow before it as they would to himself if he were present. Tell would not pay this homage, and was therefore ordered to be hanged, having, however, the choice presented to him of shooting at a certain distance an apple from the head of his own son. This Tell accepted, and performed his task so well, that he succeeded in striking off the apple without touching his boy. Was he not, in this one successful act, well repaid for all the pains he had taken in becoming a good archer ?

Another true story which we shall mention

is not quite so well known. Aster, a celebrated archer of Greece, offered his services to Philip, king of Macedon, telling him, in proof of his skill, that he could bring down birds in their most rapid flight. Philip said, "Well, I will take you into my service when I make war upon starlings." This reply so enraged Aster, that he went to Methone, a small city which Philip was then besieging, and from thence aimed an arrow at the monarch, on which was written, "To Philip's right eye;" and so sure was his aim, that he put out the sight of the king's right eye. Philip then shot the arrow back with these words on it, "If Philip take the city he will hang up Aster." And so it was, when the city was taken, the archer was hung.

Both these stories show, though in different ways, the truth of what we have said, that the value of skill very much depends upon the use we make of it. William Tell's skill was the means of saving his own life and

that of his child ; while Aster employed his valent in wickedly revenging an insult, and in the end losing his life.

Very often we find, in Scripture, that the bow is spoken of. We will notice only one instance ; and let us look a little at the history connected with it. But you must take up your Bibles, for we cannot do without them, and, turning to the eighteenth chapter of the second book of Chronicles, we shall find that Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, had requested Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, to go up with him to Ramoth-Gilead to war against the king of Syria. Now, see what it is to keep company with wicked people, and how little trust is to be placed in their friendship. “The king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that were with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel.” So the cowardly and selfish king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat,

“I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes.” He would rather that he were slain than himself. But God appeared in behalf of Jehoshaphat. And then comes the verse, “And a certain man drew a bow at venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness” (or armour). The archer did not know that it was the king of Israel, and the bow was drawn at a venture; but it was the most successful of all the arrows shot that day.

Now, this is exactly our position with regard to our young readers. We do not know any of you. We are ignorant of your tempers and habits, your studies and pursuits and sports. We do not know whether you have any brothers or sisters, or whether you are an only child. So, in writing to you, we must “draw our bow at a venture.” But we want our words to be like so many arrows, and to reach your minds and hearts,

and fasten themselves in the faults that are there. And we are going to speak, first of all, about

SELFISHNESS.

The undue love of self is a very common fault, and the source of many others ; such as envy, jealousy, and backbiting : and, when people are very selfish, they will sometimes tell falsehoods, and cheat, and be very unkind to others, for the sake of serving themselves and getting their own way. Selfishness is very displeasing to God. It is a breaking of the command which teaches us to “love our neighbours as ourselves,” and to “do to others as we would they should do unto us ;” for those who are selfish love themselves better than they love any one else, and would be very sorry if others were to do to them as they do to others. Those who are selfish are never loved by anybody, and of course cannot be truly happy, not half so happy as those who are willing to

give up their own wishes and pleasure for the sake of others.

We know a youth, we will not tell you his name, or where he lives ; but he is of a very selfish temper, and it shows itself in all sorts of ways. When he was quite young, he was so jealous that he could not bear to see his mother kiss his little brothers and sisters ; and he wanted all their toys, though he never gave them any of his own ; and if he could not have them, he would try to spoil their pleasure by breaking them. If any cake or fruit were handed to him, he always picked the largest and the best. In cold weather he always tried to get the seat next the fire ; and, in summer, one near an open window ; and, if there were any sight to be seen, he always chose the best place for seeing it, and he did not mind pushing, or behaving very rudely, for the sake of getting it. He might have known, if he had thought about it, that *somebody* must have

the worst seat and the worst place ; but, the truth is, he never thought of anybody but himself ; and, if he had, he would not have been willing to give up to them.

And he was just the same at school as he was at home and in company : he cheated so in his games, that at last none of the boys would play with him ; and he almost hated the schoolfellow who happened to take his place in his class, or to keep the top for any length of time. As he could not bear that his master should like anybody better than him, he was always telling tales of those who were favourites with the master because they were diligent and attentive boys. But it did not serve his purpose, for his master was too wise to be misled by it.

He has now left school, and has grown to be almost a man ; but his selfishness has kept pace, and grown as fast as he has done.

What do you think of our story ? Would any of you choose this youth for a com-

panion, or desire to imitate his example? We hope none of you resemble him already. But we think we see a little boy there, shrugging his shoulders, and twisting about as if he were not quite easy. Has the arrow hit him, and struck into some selfish practice he is prone to indulge in? He may draw it out by degrees. Giving up the habit will soon ease the smart, and perfect goodwill and kindness and love will leave no selfishness for the arrow to fasten in. But he can never alter the past, or do right in the future, in his own strength; so we must pray to God to forgive him, for Jesus Christ's sake, what he has done amiss, and to give him a new heart, so that he may strive against his selfishness in the time to come.

Perhaps some of you, who may pride yourselves upon being what is called rather sharp, may say, "We do not see why selfishness should be charged upon us young people; we know many grown-up persons

that are quite as selfish as we are." Very true; and so do we. But, then, they were selfish when they were children. And it is *because* selfish children become selfish men and women that we wish you may alter now, while it is easier than it will be when you are older.

PRIDE AND VANITY.

We are going to draw our bow again. Take care, take care; we intend to let our arrows fly right and left. We are going to shoot at pride and vanity. So let all proud and vain children get out of the way.

Pride and vanity in many respects resemble each other. They both arise out of our thinking too much of ourselves, or of something that belongs to us; and some persons are vain of the very same things that others are proud of. Pride and vanity are, however, unlike in this; vanity makes no difference to anybody except those who indulge in it, while pride affects the comfort and

happiness of others, proud people often behaving very rudely to those whom they consider in any respect their inferiors.

We knew a little girl who was always looking at herself in the glass, admiring her fair complexion and her curls. She was continually watching to see who noticed her, and she liked to be with those who were foolish enough to call her pretty, and to praise her dress and flatter her. This was a *vain* child.

And she had a cousin who was as *proud* as she was vain. His father had a handsome house and a carriage, and a great many servants. And this proud boy fancied himself quite a little lord, and looked so scornfully on those who were not so grand or well dressed as himself, and spoke so haughtily to the servants, that he was very much disliked.

And now we think you will see both the similarity and the difference between pride and vanity.

As we talk about a few of the many things of which children are either vain or proud, and to show the folly of their being so, let each ask, "Is this like me?" "Do I conduct myself in this way?"

Some are vain of their *persons*. Of this we have already given an instance, and therefore shall not dwell upon it now, further than to remark that beauty, however pleasing in itself, is quite spoiled by vanity.

Others are vain of their *dress*. If they happen to have a new robe, or sash, or hat, they want everybody to see it, and seem to think themselves of great consequence. And it is not only the children of rich people who act in this way. Did you never see a girl in the school seem very full of herself because she had got a smart bonnet? And did you not notice how she looked down upon the shabby frock and old shoes of the poor little girl who sat next to her, and whom she

ought rather to have pitied? Oh! it was very offensive in the sight of God.

Some are proud of their *circumstances*, or, I should rather say, are proud because their parents are rich and live in grandeur. But wealth is God's gift, and no cause for pride, but demands gratitude for his undeserved goodness. Thinkest thou, O child of rich parents, that it is for any merit in thee that these blessings are bestowed?

Others, again, are proud of their *abilities* and *attainments*. They think themselves very clever, and love to talk and show off. But nobody likes these conceited children; and if they would only consider how very little it is that they *do* know, compared with the much that they *do not* know, they would be more humble, and be willing to listen and learn, instead of thinking much of themselves and exhibiting before others.

To conclude. Beauty, and goodly attire, and wealth, and talents, and knowledge, are

not naturally our own. In whatever degree we possess them, they have been bestowed upon us by God. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

Above all things, remember the disapprobation of pride God invariably expresses throughout the Scriptures. Perhaps there is no sin, excepting idolatry, that more excites his displeasure. Remember also his sweet promise of mercy and favour to the humble. He has said that he will have "respect unto the lowly," and will "dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit."



BERTHELOT MILON.

—88—

IN 1534, Francis the First was reigning in France; Henry the Eighth was king of England. Germany had risen up some years before at the call of Martin Luther, and, reading its new-found Bible by the dawning light of the Reformation, resolved to shake off the power of Rome. England was awakening too. And even in France there were many who loved the word of God, and believed that there was no priest but the Lord Jesus Christ, no salvation except through faith in him. The Gospel won its way among all ranks. The gentle queen, Margaret of Navarre, felt its power, and tried to persuade her much-loved brother Francis to listen to the good news which

told of a free pardon of sin's guilt, and deliverance from its reign, free to us because Jesus paid the price. But the king of France liked the loud trumpet of martial fame and the soft songs of pleasure far better than the still small voice of conscience and the favour of God. Glory was his idol. At its shrine he sacrificed many a Christian hero; and Paris was mute with terror as martyr after martyr, loving the truth more than life itself, passed through the flames to join the noble army above.

In a street near the centre of Paris there was a shoemaker's shop. A poor deformed young man sat near the window watching the passers-by and making remarks on their appearance. His limbs were crippled, and all his body paralysed, except his arms and tongue. This was the shoemaker's son, Berthelot Milon. He had not always been such a melancholy object. Berthelot was once the handsomest, cleverest young man

in the parish. But he had been the wickedest too; the very ringleader of all the wild youths who lived near to him. He had run into every sort of excess, despised God, and laughed at pious people.

On one occasion, while in the midst of some giddy amusement, he fell and broke his ribs. Refusing to try any remedy, he gradually grew worse. Paralysis crept over his frame; his wild roving life was gone for ever. Sick and sorrowful, he was compelled to sit all day long in his father's shop. A very miserable object he was, unsightly in body, unhappy in mind. His temper was quite soured by his troubles, and his only pastime seemed to be insulting any of the passers-by whom he knew to be Bible readers.

One day, seeing a pious man, he began to mock him by nicknames and taunts. The good man stopped, and, feeling deep pity for the wretched Berthelot, said gently and

lovingly to him, "Poor young man, why do you mock the passers-by? Do you not see that God has bent your body in this way in order to straighten your soul? Look at this book; a few days hence you will tell me what you think of it." Milon took the offered New Testament, and read it night and day. The word of God pierced his heart. Never before had he felt that his *soul* was crooked and diseased. He was in agony. The Saviour then showed him his grace and love. "Mercy has found me," said Milon, "in order that the love of God, which pardons the greatest sinners, should be placed as on a hill, and be seen by all the world." He now wished to share the treasure he had found in the Gospel with his father, his friends, and the customers who came to the shoemaker's shop. The poor cripple had become useful and happy.

Berthelot could not be idle. The same restless activity which had formerly led him

into sin was now employed in doing good. He gathered children, and taught them to write the holy words that had brought peace to his own soul. At other times he worked with his hands to earn money for the poor. He was able to engrave beautifully, and found constant employment in ornamenting knives, daggers, and sword-blades, or in doing curious little bits of workmanship for the goldsmiths. His musical skill was also very great, and the fine voice which he had formerly employed in singing foolish songs was now devoted to the service of God. Great numbers of people flocked to Milon's shop to see the man so suddenly changed, to look at his handiwork, or to listen to his singing. "If God has bestowed these gifts on me," said the poor paralytic, "it is to the end that his glory should be magnified in me."

While things were going on thus in the shoemaker's shop, it happened that some

zealous people in Paris, who had felt the power of the truth of God in making them free, resolved to publish a strong protest against the errors of popery. This protest was printed on placards, and these papers were posted on one night, on the 24th of October, in every street of the capital, as well as in many other cities of France. When morning dawned, all Paris was in commotion ; the fury of the Roman Catholics knew no bounds. Every one asked for the author of the placards, or for those who had helped to circulate them. Of course many hands had been engaged in this work. But secret work it was obliged to be, while so large a number of enemies to the Reformation were abroad. The king was very angry at this public protest against his religion, and fancied that his majesty had been insulted. So he commanded that every one who had posted a placard should be put into prison. "Let all be seized without distinction," he

cried, "who are suspected of Lutheresy ; I will kill them all."

Some of the daring protesters of the night before were now silent, and hidden in cellars, garrets, and out-of-the-way corners. Among others there were heart-rending partings. Many took refuge in flight. For those who lingered a sadder fate was waiting.

Great numbers were thrown into prison. Informers were easily found ; for the king allowed them to get a fourth part of the accused person's property. And these "quadruplers," as they were called, were very busy in hunting out victims ; but, if there was one man who might be expected to escape the suspicion of having posted these hated placards, it was poor Berthelot Milon, the cripple. No matter. A cruel officer of the king found his way to the bedside of the sufferer, and, foaming with rage, told him to rise and follow him. "Alas ! sir," said Berthelot, with a smile, "it

requires a greater master than you to make me rise." "Take this fellow away," said the unfeeling officer to his men. The patient Milon was then flung into prison, where some of his friends were already awaiting the day of their trial.

Calmly the days passed here. Formerly a touch from the kindest hand would have made Milon cry out with pain; now the roughest handling seemed tender. God gave him patience, strength, and even joy. This helpless cripple was the support of his companions in trouble, guiding and gladdening them by his faith and hope.

The trial-day arrived. It was the 10th of November. Milon could not be accused of fastening up placards in the streets; however, some were said to have been found in his father's shop. It was enough. He and his fellow-prisoners were condemned to be burnt alive at different places, on different days. The judges hoped, by these severe

measures, to spread terror over the entire city.

Three days after this sentence, one of the gaolers entered the cell of Berthelot Milon, and, lifting him in his arms, placed him in the cart which was to carry him to execution. The procession passed the shoemaker's shop. The poor cripple saluted it smilingly. When he reached the place of death, the stake was prepared, and the fagots already in a blaze. "Lower the flames," exclaimed the officer in command; "the sentence orders him to be burnt at a slow fire." Sad news for surrounding friends. Words of praise and joy were alone heard from the lips of Berthelot; he rejoiced at being counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. His very enemies wondered and admired; and, as the blackened body of the martyr sank beneath the flames, his friends exclaimed, "Oh, how great is the constancy of this witness to the

Son of God, both in his life and in his death!"

The persecution begun in this reign was carried on with great fury through following ages. The Reformation in France was solemnly devoted to death by a king and his parliament in 1535; and successive rulers tried to drown it in blood, burn it at the stake, or wear it slowly out in the galleys. Still, the good seed of God's word liveth and abideth for ever. It has already brought forth fruit in France; and if the past harvests have only yielded thirty or sixty, let us earnestly pray the Lord of Harvests that those of the future may bring forth a hundred-fold.



THE GREAT GERMAN REFORMER.

—38—

MARTIN LUTHER, the great reformer of Germany, was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, November 10th, 1483. His father was a miner and woodcutter, and so poor, that it cost him and his good wife no little trouble to bring up their eight children, of whom Martin was the eldest. However, as he prospered a little in his affairs, he managed to give to his son Martin a good education. When about fourteen years of age, the lad was sent to learn Latin at Magdeburg; but, as money was still rather scarce at home, the boy was often obliged to go from door to door singing, and asking for a little bread.

This was the custom of poor students in those days. Sometimes the people were kind, praised his music and gave him food, but at other times the tired singer went back wet and hungry to his lonely bed. But God, who was guiding his steps, led him to the door of a kind woman called Ursula Cotta, where he found a happy home ; for she was so touched by his soft, sad voice, that she took Martin into her house and treated him as her own son. Here he grew rapidly in mind and body, never forgetting to improve himself in music, which was as dear to him now that he was happy as it used to be when he sang his sweet tunes from street to street.

After a short time Martin went to the university of Erfurt, and the next five years were spent in very hard study. Every morning's work began with prayer, for he used to say, "To pray well is more than half my study." One day, as he was looking in a

monastery over some old books, he found a treasure that had been years upon years hidden from the world. It was a Latin Bible—the first *whole* Bible he had ever seen. Luther was poor no longer; this dusty volume was more to him than food, or drink, or dress; and he wrote to his father, begging permission to become a monk, so as to spend all his life in the study of the word of God; for in those days people were in great darkness, because the light of the Bible had been so long hidden from them, and generally thought there was no way in which they could please God so much as by shutting themselves up in a convent or monastery, instead of following the example of our Saviour, who went about doing good. Very much against the will of his father, Luther entered the convent of Erfurt, and lived there a long time, seeking by fasting, tears, and prayers, to do something that would entitle him to the pardon of his sins,

and bring peace to his conscience; for he had not yet learned that it is only for the sake of what Jesus has done and suffered that we can be forgiven, and that we must believe on him before we can do anything to please God. But he could afterwards say from his heart, "Thou, O Christ, art my righteousness, and I am all sin. Take what is mine, and give me what is thine."

After three years' residence at the convent of Erfurt, he left it to become a Professor at Wittenberg. But he brought away two precious things—the peace of God in his heart, and the word of God in his hand. Every day, at one o'clock, Luther lectured on the Bible to the young men of his class; and his solemn manner, fine face, and clear, sweet voice, but still more the truths he taught, delighted his hearers. This little sentence, "The just shall live by faith," had, like a sharp sword, cut away the fetters that bound his own soul; and ever after he used

the same heavenly weapon to let the oppressed go free.

In 1510, Luther paid a visit to Rome, and returned greatly shocked by many foolish and wicked things he saw done there. About seven years afterwards, the pope that was then reigning at Rome, Leo X., wanted a great deal of money for various purposes, and took a very strange way of getting it. He sent monks into different countries, and told them to hold fairs where the people might buy pardon of sin. There was one old man who travelled through Germany, carrying a great red cross, and pretending to sell forgiveness: his name was Tetzal. Wherever he went immense crowds followed, welcoming him with music, and bells, and lighted tapers, and listening to all his silly stories as if they had been quite true. Luther spoke out boldly from his pulpit against the shameful sale, telling the people that none could forgive sins, but God alone; however,

Tetzel was all the fashion ; for it was easier to pay money than to repent ; and so long as the crafty old monk felt his cash-box getting heavier and heavier each day, he little cared what became of the souls of those poor people he was deceiving.

It was on the morning of October 31st, 1517, that Martin Luther walked to the church of Wittemberg, where crowds of pilgrims were going, and fastened to the door ninety-five reasons why persons should not buy Tetzel's pardons, or, as they were called, "indulgences." Before fifteen days, all Germany was ringing with the news. A short time more, and Luther's ninety-five reasons were printed in all the languages of Europe ; for the printing-press had just begun to lend its help to the spread of knowledge. Luther himself sent a copy of what he had written to the pope, who was very angry, and obliged him to appear before his legate, or ambassador, Cardinal

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Cajetan, at a great meeting to be held in the city of Augsburg, there to answer before a large assembly for his noble love of truth.

Three times he appeared before the legate, refusing to retract one word he had written until they could prove to him, from the Bible, that he was mistaken. At length the legate, thoroughly vexed and frightened, commanded Luther to be silent, and drove him from his presence. But Martin Luther was not the man to conceal what he believed to be true, and in spite of all opposition preached, and wrote, and argued; for, "Since it is now the Gospel, and not myself they attack," said he, "silence is no longer lawful." He was now at open war with Rome. The pope burned Luther's books, and in return Luther burned the pope's orders, saying that henceforth he would obey the Bible, and the Bible alone.

Sometimes Luther travelled through the

country, preaching the Gospel; and where the churches were too small to contain the people who crowded to him, he would take his stand under the spreading boughs of the linden trees, while young and old, rich and poor, heard the words of truth as they flowed from his lips.

Four years of this struggle had passed, when the youthful Charles V. ascended the throne of Germany. He was resolved to see this busy monk of whom every one talked, and Luther was summoned before him at a town called Worms. With simple trust in God, although the danger was extreme, Luther obeyed, and stood in the presence of an emperor, surrounded by princes, dukes, and bishops. He was asked to retract what he had written, the substance of which was, that the pope could not forgive sin, that sinners could be saved only by faith in Jesus Christ, and that the Bible was the true treasure of the church.

At his own request, a day was granted for consideration. He passed the night in prayer, and next evening the brave reformer appeared again before the meeting. "Here I stand: I cannot do otherwise," he exclaimed. "May God help me." Amen.

Luther's enemies urged the emperor to kill him, but Charles had promised him protection for a certain length of time, and would not break his word. On his homeward journey, a strange resting-place opened for him. The elector of Saxony, knowing Luther's danger, sent five armed horsemen to arrest him on a lonely part of the road, and carry him off like a prisoner to the castle of Wartburg. His friends wept for him as dead. His foes rejoiced at his overthrow. But both were mistaken. Luther was alive, though hidden, and employed his leisure in preparing for his countrymen the noblest gift they ever got—the book which taught them to read, believe, and love—the

Bible in their own language. After ten months he returned to Wittemberg, where he was received with shouts of joy; and now with unsparing hands he attacked the errors of the church of Rome, contrasting its teaching with that of the word of God. Nor did he forget his old taste for music: the good news of a Saviour's love overflowed from his heart in beautiful song, and he spoke to the German heart in its second language—music. I cannot tell you of half the things that occupied Luther during the remainder of his busy life; but by-and-by you shall read them for yourselves, and you will not love him less when you know him better. You will, perhaps, get a peep into his house, and see that this great man, whose words woke up a sleeping world, was like a child among his children, working in the garden and playing with them, telling them wonderful stories, and writing such beautiful letters, that you could read them over and

over again. Sickness and pain warned Luther that he was soon to serve God in another world ; and when he died, weeping crowds felt that they had lost a father and a friend.

Luther was dead, but his work could not die ; he had given to his countrymen the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, and by bringing them back to the pure teaching of the Bible left Germany—Protestant !



THE MARTYR ARCHBISHOP.



A GREAT many years ago, the people in England were Roman Catholics. They used to worship the Virgin Mary, and believed that if they prayed to the departed saints, their prayers would be heard, and that the saints would intercede with God for them : just as the people in some foreign lands still believe. Now, we know from the Bible that there is but One who can plead for us with God—Jesus Christ, his only Son : he is the only Mediator between God and man. Another very false idea that they had was this, that if they had committed any wicked act, and went to a priest and paid him some money, he could secure for them

pardon for their sins. Persons also used to go about the land, and offer scraps of paper, on which it was written that the buyer's sins were forgiven, and in return for this, sums of money were paid. Besides all this, the priests would not allow the people to have the Bible to read; and even in the churches they got no good from it, for then only portions of the Bible were commonly read and said in Latin, a language that none but the learned men could understand.

Before the time of Cranmer, of whom you are about to read, there had often been found men who were bold enough to say that the Roman Catholics were wrong, who tried to teach the people better things, and to persuade them to read the Bible; but they had only found a very few who would listen to them, and they had not been able to gain much ground then. At last, however, there came a happier time for England: when the Roman Catholic religion

was nearly done away with, and the English became Protestants.

It took, however, a long time before this happy period came; and a great many good men were put to death because they said that there were errors in the Romish religion, and because they wished to let the people have the Bible to read for themselves. THOMAS CRANMER was one of those men who suffered death for the sake of the Gospel.

He lived in the reign of King Henry VIII. This king was not a pious man, though he was a good friend to Cranmer. He had been only a poor priest, of Cambridge; but Henry took much notice of him, and after a time made him archbishop of Canterbury.

Cranmer soon found out how many errors there were in the Romish church, and his greatest wish was to reform the religion of England. King Henry was a man that did not care much about any religion; but as he was partial to Cranmer, and as he had

quarrelled with the pope, who is the head of the Roman Catholic church, he often allowed Cranmer to do many things that he wished in order to weaken the power of the Romish church in England.

One good thing that the king gave him leave to do was, to have an English Bible placed in every parish church in England. These Bibles were so precious and scarce, that they were obliged to be chained to the reading-desks, for fear they should be stolen ; and the people were so anxious to hear the word of God, that they came in crowds to the churches to have the Bible read to them.

Another thing that Cranmer did was, to have the Book of Common Prayer drawn up nearly in the same form as it is at the present day.

King Henry continued to be a worldly man, it is feared, even to the end of his life. When he was dying, however, he sent for Cranmer to come and pray by him. But

when the pious man arrived, Henry could no longer speak. Cranmer begged him to give some sign that he died in the faith of Jesus Christ. The poor king could not say anything, but pressed Cranmer's hand and died.

Henry's son, Edward, now became king. He was a gentle boy, and only nine years old when he began to reign, and he died when he was sixteen. On the day of his coronation, Archbishop Cranmer addressed him on his duties as king of England. He told him that, as the good young king of Israel, Josiah, had destroyed all the images of the heathen that the Israelites had worshipped in former reigns, so he should remove all the idols of the church of Rome, and see God truly worshipped in his kingdom of England. Cranmer was the young Edward's guide in everything that was good; and during his reign the Protestant religion prospered in England. After his

death, however, Mary reigned as queen ; she did not love the Protestants. She was sister to young Edward. All through her reign the Protestants were persecuted. She had two friends, named Gardiner and Bonner. They were Roman Catholic bishops, and they encouraged the queen in her cruel ways. Cranmer being such an earnest Protestant, soon became the object of their hatred. He was taken prisoner to Oxford, where he was kept while they decided what to do with him. After a few days, he was brought before an assembly of bishops, and told to repent of his doctrines, and to return to the Romish church. After Cranmer had knelt down and prayed for a few minutes, he rose and declared his firm intention to remain a Protestant. One of the bishops, named Brooks, then required him to acknowledge the pope as head of the church ; but he would not agree to this. When the bishops found that they could not persuade

Cranmer to return to their church, they reviled him; but the good archbishop bore all their hard words in silence. When he was taken back to prison, he was told that he must appear before the pope in eighty days' time. But the queen and her friends were resolved to destroy him; so he was kept prisoner at Oxford, and not allowed to keep the appointment with the pope, though he would willingly have done so; and when, at the end of eighty days, he did not appear at Rome, the pope sent to condemn him to death. This was just what the queen wanted. But first he was to be publicly degraded, and the office of archbishop taken from him. So he was dressed up in garments made of canvas and old rags. They took from him all that belonged to him as archbishop; and Bonner abused him all the time, Cranmer replying very meekly. Then he was taken back to prison. After a few more days he was again led into St. Mary's Church at

Oxford, and was compelled to mount a stool and listen to a sermon preached against him by a priest. When he attempted to speak, the priest cried out, "Stop his mouth, and take him away." He was then dragged from the stand, and hurried away to a fire that had been kindled in the market-place, where he was tied to a stake in the middle of the flames.

Some time before this, when his faith was weak, he signed a paper which contained doctrines in favour of the church of Rome; but of this error he had repented so much, that when he was tied to the stake, he stretched forth his right hand, and held it in the flames till it was consumed, saying, "This hand has offended;" because he had signed the paper with his right hand.

Thus died Archbishop Cranmer, as a humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of men. There are many more who, like him, suffered death for the

truth's sake, and whose names do not appear in earthly histories; but we may be sure that they are written in a more lasting record, even in the Book of Life.



BAN DE LA ROCHE.

— 38 —

ON the side of some mountains, in the north-east of France, is a district called Ban de la Roche, which means the District of the Rock. The Germans, who dwell very near, named the chief village Steinthal, or the Valley of Stone; so that it was not a very promising region—indeed, it was so barren, that it was said a woman might carry home in her apron as much hay as her husband could mow in a whole morning. At the time to which we now refer there were not more than a hundred families, and they earned but a scanty living; they were very poor and ignorant. It is true they had school-houses; but they were wretched

cottages, in which a number of noisy, wild, dirty children were crowded together, with men to take care of them, who had previously done nothing but look after pigs and sheep, and for which they had become too old. Their condition was wretched indeed.

A Christian minister, named Stouber, went among them, and did much for their good; and he was succeeded by one who taught the people by example more than by any other means. He was, it is true, their teacher and preacher; but then he would not have done much by telling them one thing and doing another: he must do as he said.

His name was John Frederick Oberlin, who was born at Strasbourg, August 31, 1740. When a little boy, he was kind and gentle to everybody. He saved his money carefully, that he might help those who needed it. If, when the tailor's or shoemaker's bill came in, he thought his father

had not quite enough to pay it, Frederick got his money-box, and poured the money into his father's hand to help pay the bill.

One day, as he was crossing the market-place, some rude boys upset a basket of eggs which a poor countrywoman was carrying upon her head. Frederick told the boys how wrongly they had acted, and then ran home and brought his money-box, which was nearly full, and gave all that was in it to the poor woman. Another day he saw a poor woman, who wanted to buy an article of clothing she much needed, turn away from the shop because she had not money enough; he whispered to the seller to let her have it, and made up the difference, telling him to call her back.

At a very early age, Frederick used to offer up this little prayer: "O God, teach me to do thy will;" and it was always his aim through life to make the will of God his own, and hence it was a pleasure to him

to do what God commanded. When Oberlin grew up, he became a minister of the Gospel, and went to live among the people of Bande la Roche, in 1767. The district was divided into two parishes, Rothau and Waldbach. The latter contained five hamlets, of which that of Waldbach was the chief.

The people had no roads from one place to another, and the only way they could go was to cross the river Bruche, which was thirty feet wide, by means of stepping-stones in summer, and on the ice in winter. The farmers had no ploughs nor hoes; in fact, nothing that was fit to work with, and could not raise fruit and grain enough to live on. The people, too, were so indolent and ignorant, that they did not wish to be taught, as they considered it would be too much trouble. Some of the worst of them resolved to waylay and beat Oberlin. He was told that they were going to do so on the next Sunday. He went, and preached from the

words of Jesus: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matt. v. 39. He spoke of the patience with which Christians should suffer injuries and submit to ill-usage. Many of the guilty hearers assembled after the sermon at an appointed place, laughing among themselves, and asking how he would behave when he was called to practise what he had been preaching. While they were thus talking, Oberlin, to their great surprise, entered, saying, with great calmness, "Here am I, my friends; I have heard of what you were going to do. I am come to give myself up to you." The peasants were overwhelmed with shame, begged forgiveness, and hastened away much abashed.

A few Sundays after, some more wicked young people made up their minds to seize him as he came home from public worship, and throw him into a cistern. Mr. Oberlin

preached about the happiness and safety of those who put their trust in God, and said that no one could hurt those whom God took care of. As he walked home, he had not gone far before he saw these persons hiding themselves ; but he went by them in such a calm, composed manner, that they were so astonished that they did not venture out. He was showing them that he believed what he had been preaching, that God would take care of him.

The people were sorry that they could have entertained the idea of hurting one so gentle and so kind, and were anxious to regain the favour they had forfeited, so that they afterwards tried to help him as much as they could.

His first work was to make roads out of the wild mountain district to other places. He told the villagers that they must set to work and break the rocks, and carry enough large pieces to erect a wall to support a road

for the distance of a mile and a half, and also to build a bridge over the river. The peasants wondered to hear him talk in this manner; they thought it could not be done, and said that they would rather not try; and one after another excused themselves. Oberlin did all he could to persuade them to do it; at last he said, "Let all who think that what I propose is needed come and work with me;" and away he went, with a pickaxe on his shoulder, and set to work in good earnest at the most difficult part; and soon the people followed his example, and began to work too with the tools he had provided for them; and quickly the work was finished, and a bridge built over the river, which was called "The Bridge of Charity."

There were neither masons, blacksmiths, nor cartwrights, in the Ban de la Roche; Oberlin, therefore, chose out some of the older boys, and sent them to Strasbourg to

learn different trades ; and when these boys came home, they taught other boys. He also taught the people to build neat little cottages for themselves. But they were not quite willing to work on their land, and make good gardens and orchards. He therefore determined to appeal to their eyes rather than their ears, and to set them an example. Near the parsonage were two gardens, which the villagers used to pass every day when they went to work. He and his servant planted young trees and made quite a nursery of apples, pears, plums, cherries, and other fruit, where the ground had been formerly very poor. The people soon did as Oberlin expected ; they came and asked him how such fine trees could grow in such poor soil. He first of all, as was his custom, told them that God caused them to grow, and then told them how he had cultivated the ground, and that if they would reap the fruit, they must do as he did. They soon

began to plant trees, and their neat cottages were in the course of a few years surrounded by gardens and orchards.

Oberlin did not forget the young people, but set up district schools for their benefit—infant schools, too, for the little children; and on the Sunday the children came to the church to sing hymns and repeat Bible lessons. Oberlin would talk to them about their lessons, and tell them to love their heavenly Father. He gave and lent them books to read. In the week, too, the scholars came together, and their kind teacher talked to them about their lessons, and about their studies; and almost everybody called him “Dear Papa,” they loved him so much.

Thus by example Oberlin taught the people to cut roads through rocks, build bridges over dangerous rivers, erect neat cottages, lay out plantations, cultivate fields, apprentice and educate their children, and to print as well as read useful books. His

ingenuity and skill, his gentleness and mildness, made people strive to do as he did; and thus the rude, ignorant, and idle became civil, intelligent, and industrious. His bad habits gave place to good ones, and his selfishness to Christian love.

At length his useful life came to a close. He died at the age of eighty-six, and the procession of those who attended his funeral extended for two miles.

Oberlin was very careful to ascribe the praise of all he did to Him to whom it was due. Every one is not called to the same work as this good man, but all may set an example of humility, and kindness, of diligence, and love one to another. If we love the Lord Jesus Christ we shall pray for the Holy Spirit, to enable us to let our example so shine, that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

THE LITTLE FOREST GIRL.

—8½—

ABOUT five hundred years ago, when Popery was the religion of the country, and when pilgrims crossed the seas to visit what is called the Holy Land, a little girl—oh, such a sweet, simple child, with bright yellow hair!—sat on a mossy stone, near a cottage door, reading a book.

The book was wide open, and lay upon her knee, and her mild blue eyes were fixed upon it. She pointed the place carefully with her little finger as she went on, and while she read page after page, her colour came and went again. Her golden hair, as it hung down, half hid her face. On went the child reading and wondering.

There was no garden round the house, for the cottage stood in a forest. The deer with

their branching horns lay under the tree the birds sang in the branches, and cowslips and daffodils were growing here and there but the little child did not regard them ; she minded nothing but the book on her knee.

While she read, the bee came hummin around her, and the butterfly fluttered over her head ; but it did not matter, she looked at neither the butterfly nor the bees—she only looked at her book.

Now, it happened that a grey-headed pilgrim came that way, and he spoke to her “How is it that you sit here reading, my little maid ? Why do you not get up and play ? Hark at the birds, and look at the bees and the butterflies.”

“Nay, sir,” said the little girl, “I must read this book, for I like it better than my play. My father is a forester, and takes care of the deer. My mother taught me to read ; but she is dead, and the daisies grow on her grave. My brother lives with the

monks, and he has brought me this book, but only for the day."

"And what is the book, my child? Few grown people besides the monks can read, and you are very young even to know your letters."

"Oh, sir, it is a fine book; I have read many books, but none like this. If you will please to leave me, sir, I will go on reading it."

"Read it to me," said the pilgrim; and the child at once went on. It was the Gospel of Saint John the child was reading, and tears from her gentle eyes fell down upon the page. The pilgrim was moved by the words of love and mercy, and as he sat with bended head, listening, a big drop now and then rolled down his cheek.

"I have heard," said he, "the Pope at Rome speak to the people, but never did such words as these fall from his lips. The book is a blessed book, the words are blessed words. Tell me, child, who spoke them?"

“They are the words of our Saviour,” said she; “sweet and holy words, done into plain English, that simple people who can read may understand them.”

“Blessed be God!” replied the pilgrim. “Had the book been mine, I need not have crossed the seas on pilgrimage. I never heard before such words of love and truth. Do let me read awhile.”

The child gave up the book, and the pilgrim began to read it. Page after page was turned, but still he kept reading, till the blazing sun was about to set, for his heart beat fast within him. The little girl went into the cottage, and brought out a cake of wheaten bread, and set beside him; but he heeded it not: the cake lay unbroken, nor did he raise his head until he had read every page written in the book.

The sturdy forester came home with a slain deer on his broad shoulders, and he and the poor pilgrim went into the cottage, and

sat down to meat. The pilgrim told how he had eaten on the Mount of Olives ; drunk at Jacob's well ; prayed in the garden where the Saviour prayed, and visited the tomb in which he was laid. And then he took up the book, and read about the prodigal, and the widow's mite, and the words of comfort spoken by Jesus Christ, and all about his deeds of mercy, and how he had died for sinners on Calvary's cross, and risen again, and gone to heaven to prepare a place for them that love him.

As bread is to the hungry, and the clear water of the fountain to the thirsty, so were the words of that blessed book to the soul of the forester ; he was never weary of listening. And so the pilgrim went on reading through the night, even till the day dawned, and then came the forester's son, who lived with the monks, to fetch away the book.

You should have seen how troubled he was, and how his face turned pale ; for the

king, he said, had made a law to prevent every one from reading the book. But though this was true, and though the father abbot had declared the book to be an unholy heresy, neither the abbot, nor the king, nor the law could undo what the blessed book, with a holy influence, had done, in the hearts of the pilgrim, the forester, and that sweet, simple child.

Young reader, you have not only the Gospel of St. John, but a whole Bible, that you may read every day; and no abbot, nor king, nor law has power to prevent you pondering on its blessed pages. Do you, then, value God's holy word half as much as the little child, the pilgrim, and the forester in the tale that I have told you? "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. ii. 2. "Receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Jas. i. 21.

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11-14

